

25. *Aceto-Spirituos Tincture of Cantharides*.—D. S. YOUNG, Esq. gives in the 7th vol. of the *Transactions of the Medical and Physical Society of Calcutta*, the following formulæ for the preparation of an aceto-spirituos tincture of cantharides. Take of concentrated acetic acid, nine ounces; rectified spirits, three ounces; Spanish flies, four ounces. The Spanish flies to be coarsely powdered and put into a wide-mouth glass-stopper bottle, when the acetic acid and rectified spirits are to be added. Let the whole digest for five days exposed to the sun, be then strained through flannel, and kept for use. The quantity will be about eight ounces.

Mr. Young extols this preparation as a substitute for the emplastrum lyttæ. He states that when it is rubbed upon any part of the body for about three minutes or until a pricking sensation is felt, that in two or three hours afterwards complete vesication will be produced. Mr. Young claims for it the advantage of the E. lyttæ of not occasioning strangury, but being more prompt in its operation and being more conveniently applied in certain situations.

The late distinguished Wm. Twining, Esq. and D. Stewart, Esq. confirm Mr. Young's statement. The former says that he employed the preparation in sixteen cases, and that it has invariably acted as a rubefacient, if quickly brushed over the skin; and when the skin was freely wetted with it, and rubbed for the space of three minutes, a perfect vesication is formed in two or three hours. "The blister," he adds, "has been in all cases more complete, and contained more serum than that produced by the emp. lyttæ. The remedy can be more exactly confined to the part which we desire to affect, and the margin of the vesication is well defined; the whole of the cuticle is more generally removed than by the common blistering plaster; and a more prompt and more free suppuration usually takes place." The pain from the application of this preparation, he states to be more severe, but more transient than that produced by the blistering ointment.

THERAPEUTICS.

26. *On the simple Antiphlogistic Method of treating Syphilis*. By M. DEVENGE, senior, Chief Surgeon of Gros-Caillou.—I have shown in my *Clinical Report of the Syphilitic Disease*, that various French and foreign physicians, between 1548 and 1833, treated venereal complaints without mercury, by strict regimen and other simple and rational measures. I propose to mention here the results which I have obtained from the year 1819 to the 1st of Sept. 1835.

I should mention that I had occasion, in my service in the army, to treat numerous cases between 1804 and 1815. Though educated in the belief of a specific virus, so generally received at the period of my studies, finding every where in Germany, where I was constantly stationed from 1806 to 1813, the same doctrine confidently avowed and put in practice, a little time and reflection satisfied me, that all the frightful evils which I had incessantly before my eyes were the effect rather of unseasonable treatment than of the disease itself.

During ten years that I was living with the same men, the division of Cuirasiers of General Nansouty, with whose habits, mode of life, temperance or excess, I was well acquainted, I ascertained that the primary symptoms, especially chancre, were often cured, without relapse, by attention to cleanliness, aided by sobriety and by the powers of nature, in certain soldiers who concealed their complaints, while, on the other hand, their comrades, more obedient to medical prescriptions, did not always escape consecutive symptoms by methodical treatment. These facts were not lost on me. Since 1808, but especially since 1818, I obtained rapid and certain cures in the treatment of secondary symptoms, either by sudorifics, conjoined with strict regimen, or by the latter means alone, in patients who had sufficient resolution and inclination to confine themselves to a scanty vegetable diet.

When at the close of 1814, I became attached as senior surgeon to the Val de Grace, I was very desirous to make trials for arriving at the same result in the cure of recent venereal symptoms, by rejecting the employment of mercurial remedies. The principles explained in the works then published on the subject, and so accordant with the facts observed by myself, were assurances that I should

succced. But more than one obstacle prevented me from making conveniently in the treatment of the venereal cases, the trials for which I was so anxious. Here as every where else, mercury under three forms, ointment, liquor, and pills formed in general the treatment of the primary affections. Physicians and patients showed themselves equally persuaded that this metal was the only remedy against their distempers. To propose publicly a reform would have been equivalent to provoking an anathema against me. I was therefore obliged to proceed with reserve.

Nevertheless, from 1819 to the month of April, 1835, when I quitted the division of the venereal cases, aided by most of the pupils, I had several opportunities of introducing freely in the treatment of this class of patients, the improvements suggested by experience and reasoning. Those who already victims of the effects of mercury, refused to take more, when symptoms recently contracted brought them again to the hospital, fell naturally under my care. As to those who believed that mercury was the true specific, I began mercurial frictions in small doses, one drachm every two or three days, after the acute stage was over. Already sparingly nutritive regimen, local blood-lettings, and rest had effected an important modification. Time passed; the cure advanced; and *seven or eight drachms* of mercurial ointment were sufficient to put these soldiers in a condition to quit the hospital after an abode of *thirty or thirty-five days*. Those, on the contrary, who were subjected to the ordinary mercurial treatment, used from *four to five ounces* of ointment, without counting the pills of Belloste (Ratier's Formulary, p. 123;) taken in the interval between the frictions, and left the hospital only after fifty-five or sixty days. When the patients suffered themselves to be guided without anxiety as to the mode of treatment, I suppressed altogether the mercurial preparations; and I arrived, nevertheless, at the same end; that is, of curing the patient more rapidly than by the ordinary method. Instructed by so many observations, agreeing with those afforded by my civil practice, I no longer doubted that *recent syphilis* might also be cured by simple and rational treatment. From this time mercury performed only a secondary part in my practice in the city. I soon renounced it almost entirely, and treated my patients by the anti-phlogistic method.

This method furnishes several genuine advantages. 1. I studied the different symptoms presented by syphilis quite uncontaminated by mercurial treatment. 2. I was able to estimate the progress and duration of each of the symptoms, primary or secondary. 3. I could distinguish the symptoms produced by the abuse of mercury or other stimulants, which, by their very energetic action, change, vitiate, or complicate venereal affections so much that they degenerate then into what the English practitioners call *pseudo-syphilis*. 4. I learned that relapses, or the formation of secondary symptoms, much less frequent and less severe after this treatment than after that by mercury. These results are confirmed by the recent writings of modern French and foreign authors.

From January, 1835, to September, 1835, I treated at Paris, in the city, and in hospitals, more than 6000 venereal patients; whom I distinguish into three epochs.

- | | |
|---|------|
| 1. Patients treated from 1815 to 1830, in the city and in the Val de Grace, | 1402 |
| 2. Patients treated from 15th June, 1831, to 1st September, 1832, in the Val de Grace, | 2000 |
| 3. ————— from the 1st of August, 1833, to the 1st September, 1835, in the Gros Caillon, | 1910 |
| 4. ————— from 1830, to the 1st September, 1835, in the city, about — | 800 |

This division will show best the difference between the time employed in treatment, especially in the number and severity of the secondary affections, which were more considerable in the first period than in the three others, since the general mercurial treatment was followed with more perseverance.

First epoch, from 1815 to 1830. I treated at the Val de Grace and in the towns, by simple and modified mercurial remedies, 1402 patients. But as the notes relating to 294 are partly mislaid and partly inaccurate, I deduct these, and reckon only 1108, which are distributed in the following manner.